

MENDELSSOHN CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA

Paul Rardin, Conductor

A Feast of Carols

December 10, 2016 | 5pm | St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill



with Mendelssohn Brass | Michael Stairs, organ | Matthew Brower, piano



**Congratulations to
Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia
for another glorious year of
*A Feast of Carols!***



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Dear Friends,

We are delighted to welcome you to our concert this evening, and hope that it in fact will prove a “feast” for the ears and eyes.

I think of Christmas as having a healthy balance of mystery and mirth. For me the mystery takes numerous forms: grand spaces such as St. Paul’s; darkness; silence; waiting; the final candle at the midnight service extinguished. I hear this element in several of our slower, lyrical pieces, most especially Jan Sandström’s haunting, ethereal setting of *Lo How a Rose E’er Blooming*.

In this evening’s case, there is mystery in the curiosity about religious traditions other than my own. While Chanukah is a lesser holiday in the Jewish tradition than Christmas is to Christians, and while Kwanzaa is a secular celebration, both holidays share with Christmas a spirit of unity and light. Our world in 2016 invites us, perhaps as urgently as ever, to unite ourselves to others through music, and it is in that spirit that we share the dancing *Mizleh hidlik* and the rhythmically driving *Harambee*.

On the mirth side, I can’t imagine Christmas without laughter. In our household we found this in each other’s company and in music; the family playlist included Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass Christmas album, film and TV soundtracks and other fun, secular favorites. It seemed natural to enjoy this immediately after Benjamin Britten’s classic *Ceremony of Carols*; the juxtaposition of sacred and secular music seemed natural. In that spirit we offer up several secular pieces tonight, including the hilarious *Christmas Medley* by Richard Gregory.

(Sidebar: The winner of the Best Sacred-Secular Mashup in Rardin Christmas lore goes to a Christmas-program typo, listing a critical line in the lyrics to the hymn *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen* as “...to save us all from Santa’s power.” Save us indeed!)

We wish you all mystery, mirth, and above all, peace in 2017. Happy Holidays,

Paul Rardin, Artistic Director

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia

Paul Rardin, Artistic Director

The Mendelssohn Brass

Michael Stairs, organ

Matthew Brower, piano

A Feast of Carols

We invite you to join us in singing all carols marked in **boldface**.

Music will proceed from one piece to the next without pause.

Kindly hold your applause until the conclusion of the concert.

...Born

O come, all ye faithful..... John Francis Wade
arranged by David Willcocks

A child is born in Bethlehem Grayston Ives

Elizabeth Oliver, soprano

Michael Stairs, organ

Hodie Christus natus estGregorian Chant

Nora Burgard, alto

Angels we have heard on high Traditional French
arranged by Richard Price

The Mendelssohn Brass

from Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248 J. S. Bach

Recitative: Und alsobald war da bei dem Engel

Chorus: Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe

Chorale: Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht

William Lim, tenor

Michael Stairs, organ

While shepherds watched their flocks by night Este's Psalter

...Night

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming Michael Praetorius
arranged by Jan Sandström

Mariane Lipson, Julia Sammin, Emily Westlake, sopranos

Kathy Haas, Jennifery Hay, Maggie Nice, altos

Joshua Hartman, John Leonard, tenors

Lucas DeJesus, Nathan Lofton, basses

I wonder as I wander John Jacob Niles
arranged by Michael Stairs

Michael Stairs, organ

In the bleak midwinter Gustav Holst
arranged by Matthew Brower

Matthew Brower, piano

Silent night Franz Gruber

Light...

Mi zeh hidlik Traditional Chanukah song
arranged by Steve Barnett

The Wexford Carol Traditional Celtic carol
arranged by Richard Price

The Mendelssohn Brass

Arabesque Louis Vierne

Michael Stairs, organ

Harambee Joseph Jennings

We three kings John H. Hopkins, Jr.

Joy...

Carol Fest Traditional Carols
arranged by James H. Laster

In dulci jubilo
Joseph dearest, Joseph mine
O little town of Bethlehem
From heaven above to earth I come
Echo Carol (While by my sheep)
Ding, dong! Merrily on high

Hark! The herald angels sing Felix Mendelssohn
arranged by David Willcocks

Tell it...

Apple-Tree Wassail Traditional English
arranged by Stephen Hatfield

Jennifer Wait, Amanda Bauman, Sierra Fox
MendelMaidens

Christmas Medley Traditional Christmas Songs
arranged by Richard Gregory

John Leonard, Joshua Hartman, Jean Bernard Cerin, Lucas DeJesus
MendelGents

Sweet little Jesus boy Robert MacGimsey
arranged by Matthew Brower

Matthew Brower, piano

Go tell it on the mountain African-American Spiritual
arranged by Bruce Saylor

Jennifer Wait, soprano

The first Nowell Traditional English Carol
arranged by David Willcocks

Paul Rardin, conductor

The Mendelssohn Brass
Michael Stairs, organ
Matthew Brower, piano

Mendelssohn Club Chorus

Dale Lower, lighting assistant

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Chestnut Hill
Saturday, December 10, 2016
5:00 pm

*The use of recording or photographic equipment during this concert
is strictly prohibited. Please silence audible cell phones and alarms.*

PROGRAM NOTES

This evening's concert unfolds in five sections which provide vignettes of the Christmas story. The music proceeds uninterrupted from piece to piece, and the audience is requested to refrain from applause until the end of the concert. Recognizing the ethnic and cultural diversity which enriches the Philadelphia area, Maestro Rardin has also programmed music celebrating Chanukah and Kwanzaa.

For many of these pieces, you know exactly what to listen for: the familiar sounds that you associate with the Christmas season, and the way these sounds call up memories, moods, and emotions that reappear this time each year. For several of the choral pieces that might be less familiar to you, we offer this listening guide to help you enjoy these new flavors in the "Feast," all of them seasoned lovingly with beautiful and familiar instrumental music for organ, piano, and brass.

...Born

O Come, All Ye Faithful has variously been identified as an ancient hymn, a Portuguese carol, and even a secret message to the supporters of the deposed Stuart dynasty! The Latin hymn was actually written in 1743 by English music teacher and engraver John Francis Wade, although it was later popularized in annual Christmas concerts at the Portuguese embassy. There have been more than 40 English translations, the most familiar being the 1853 version by Frederick Oakeley, writer and Anglican minister turned Catholic priest.

Like many British composers, Grayston Ives (b. 1948) received his early musical training as a boy chorister. After graduating with a music degree from Cambridge, he sang for seven years with the renowned ensemble The Kings Singers. He served as organist and choir director at Oxford's Magdalene College for eighteen years, where he led the choir in highly regarded performances and recordings including the sound track for *The Blue Planet* and the premiere of Paul McCartney's oratorio *Ecce Cor Meum* (Behold My Heart). The text for *A Child is Born* is taken from a 14th century Latin processional. Ives provided his own translation as well as the lilting, pastoral melody which is punctuated by more rhythmic *alleluias*.

Hodie Christus natus est (Today Christ is born) is the traditional antiphon for the vespers (evening) service on Christmas day. The angels' story continues with an arrangement of the 19th century French carol *Angels We Have Heard on High* for brass ensemble by hornist Richard Price. The *Christmas Oratorio* of J. S. Bach (1685-1750) was written in 1734 and is one of his last major sacred choral works. It is comprised of six cantatas, with one cantata sung on each of six feast days during the Christmas season. Bach, however, clearly considered the music as an organic whole, and he and his librettist Picander (Christian Friedrich Henrici) reordered the Gospel readings to provide a coherent story. The excerpts presented here are from the second section, the annunciation of Christ's birth to the shepherds. The recitative and chorus present the familiar text of the choir of angels proclaiming glory to God and peace on earth. For those familiar with Handel's setting of the same text in *Messiah*, it

is interesting to compare the two very different treatments by these contemporary masters. The chorale *Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht* was a well-known hymn of the day. Bach frequently inserted hymns into his oratorios and passions to provide something familiar to draw the congregation into the story.

What to listen for

This set strives to capture both the joy and mystery of Christ's birth. Ives's *A Child is Born in Bethlehem* is a jaunty dance featuring brief unison melodies, choral responses of "alleluia" in full harmony, and an exuberant organ part driving the music forward. Choral enthusiasts may recognize the Gregorian Chant *Hodie Christus natus est* from Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*; here the haunting melodic line intones the wonder and miracle of the Holy birth. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* is one of his great choral masterpieces; we draw these three movements, all set using well known texts from the Gospel of Luke, from the second of the six cantatas that constitute the oratorio. *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe* (Glory to God in the highest) features a single, joyous theme that is passed between all sections and decorated with fast choral flourishes, up until "and peace on earth," when the music settles into calm, lyrical lines floating over a single bass pitch. The chorale *Brich an* is known to many choral listeners by its English title, "Break forth, o beauteous heavenly light."

...Night

One of the most beautiful of Christmas carols is Michael Praetorius's (1571-1621) *Lo, how a rose e'er blooming*, a setting of an anonymous text based on Isaiah's allegorical prophecies about the messiah. It is heard here in an arrangement by Swedish composer Jan Sandström (b. 1954). While Sandström is known more as an orchestral composer, this arrangement has become his most popular work. The long, slowly changing wordless chords which form an underpinning to the Praetorius melody show the influence of the sacred minimalist style.

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980) was a singer, composer and collector of Appalachian folk music. In 1933, he collected a fragment of a song from a young girl and used it as the basis of *I wonder as I wander*, which he published in a collection of folk music in 1934. Niles's own rendition of the song, with the plucked accompaniment of a dulcimer he made himself, is considerably more plain and unvarnished than one might expect for such a beautiful melody. *In the bleak midwinter* is a wonderfully poignant Christmas poem written in 1872 by Christina Rossetti. Gustav Holst provided an equally beautiful melody in a setting for the English Hymnal in 1906.

Silent Night, that most beloved of Christmas carols, was written in 1818 by Joseph Mohr and Franz Gruber, assistant pastor and organist, respectively, of the aptly named St. Nicholas church in Oberndorf in the Austrian Alps. It is in the form of a *ländler*, a traditional Austrian folk dance (although the modern version has lost some of its dotted rhythms). The unpublished carol soon entered the repertoire of several touring folk groups, and it quickly achieved wide popularity throughout Europe as a traditional Tyrolean folk carol, much to the dismay of Gruber, who never received proper credit dur-

ing his lifetime. The English version is a paraphrase written in 1859 by Episcopal priest John Freeman Young, who traded a comfortable life as assistant rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in New York City for a considerably more adventurous one when he was named Bishop of Florida in 1867.

What to listen for

Night is an important feature of the Christmas story – its mystery, perhaps doubt, and necessity for seeing the star over Bethlehem. Christmas music about night tends to be slow, spacious, and mysterious. Swedish composer Jan Sandström's arrangement of the Praetorius chorale *Lo, how a rose e'er blooming* is truly hypnotic for its evolving, shimmering chords sung by the choir behind a traditional choral setting of the tune. John Jacob Niles' *I wonder as I wander* takes us "out under the sky" with its haunting, lyrical tune, one that sings just as much on organ as it does in the human voice. Pianist Matthew Brower brings his improvisational skills to *In the bleak midwinter*, arranging this traditional carol with a jazz-infused, personal touch.

Light...

Chanukah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, is often celebrated somewhat near to Christmas and has become entangled with that holiday. It commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem after it had been desecrated by the invading Syrian empire and retaken in a rebellion led by the Maccabees. There was only enough consecrated oil to keep the Temple lamps burning for a single night, but the oil miraculously lasted for eight days until new oil could be consecrated. *Mi zeh hidlik* is a children's Chanukah song set to a traditional Yiddish melody, heard here in an arrangement by Steve Barnett. Barnett is a longtime choral director at B'nai Emet Synagogue in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, a founding member of the Minnesota Composers Forum, producer of Minnesota Public Radio's internationally distributed *St. Paul's Sunday*, former music director of Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*, and a multiple Grammy award-winning record producer.

The *Wexford Carol* is among the most beautiful and most mysterious of carols. It was collected in Wexford County by the organist-choir director of St. Aidan's Cathedral from a local singer, and while it is often sung in Irish, the original text appears to be English. It is purported to date to the 12th century, but the evidence is slender. The origin of the hauntingly beautiful melody is unknown. It may or may not be the oldest Celtic carol, but it is well worth enjoying on its own merits.

Louis Vierne (1870-1937) was born with severe cataracts that rendered him essentially blind. When he was six, he underwent an experimental procedure that restored some vision, but he could only read oversized text and wrote music at an easel using a large pad and thick crayon. Despite his blindness, he became a virtuoso organist, a master of improvisation, and an important composer. *Arabesque* appeared in 1914 as part of a collection of free-style pieces. It has something of a Middle Eastern flavor, with long, slowly moving chords sustained in the left hand and freely moving chromatic figures in the right. There is a dreamy, almost hypnotic quality to the music, subtly seasoned with exotic touches like a whole tone scales.

Kwanzaa is a seven-day celebration of pan-African cultural values created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach. The name comes from the Swahili phrase for a harvest festival, and is based on seven principals of community life that Karenga assembled from multiple African cultures. *Harambee* is another Swahili word meaning to work together, a very appropriate title for Joseph Jennings's Kwanzaa song since the seven principles are centered on unity and cooperation. Jennings (b. 1954) is a singer, composer and conductor, highly regarded for his arrangements of spirituals, gospel music and jazz standards. He joined the renowned male ensemble Chanticleer in 1983 as a countertenor and soon became music director, a position he held until 2008. His 1998 *Harambee* is written for three ensembles of mixed voices, which creates a very richly textured sound. Within that texture, the word *harambee* is repeated over and over in groups of seven, reflecting the seven principles.

What to listen for

This set reminds us of the many themes that are common to diverse religious traditions, which bind us more than separate us. *Mi zeh hidlik* is a song for Chanukah, offered here by composer Steve Barnett in a playful, Swingle Singers-style arrangement that treats the “la la la” refrain as a subject for a classical-style fugue. Its text invites us to see the Chanukah candles through the eyes of children. *Harambee* is composed by Joseph Jennings, former music director of the outstanding American choir Chanticleer, and celebrates the seven principals of the African American holiday Kwanzaa with rhythmic energy and syncopated power. These principles, enumerated in the piece in their original Swahili, are Umoja (unity of family), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith).

Joy...

The *Carol Fest* is a medley of familiar carols arranged by James H. Laster, emeritus professor of conducting at Shenandoah Conservatory, and a prolific composer, arranger and director of musical theater. In 1328 the Dominican friar, mystic and writer Heinrich Suese recorded a vision in which an angel came up to him, told him to cast off his sorrow and join in a heavenly dance, and began to sing a joyful song about the infant Jesus, *In dulci jubilo*. The sprightly, dance-like tune first appeared in manuscript around 1400. The text of *Joseph dearest, Joseph mine* dates from about the same time, and is set to a contemporary German carol. It was featured as a lullaby in 16th century mystery plays in Germany. Phillips Brooks, then rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity on Rittenhouse Square, wrote the lyrics to *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, drawing on his experiences from a visit to Palestine in 1865. The melody heard in *Carol Fest* is *Forest Green*, adapted from an English folk song by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1906 for inclusion in the English Hymnal.

Martin Luther composed 38 hymns for congregational singing, but *From heaven above* stands apart. He wrote it in 1534 for his own children, and it was presented as a sort of play. The first five verses, which represent the announcement of Christ's birth, were sung by an adult dressed as an angel. The

next nine verses, which represent the response to this news, were sung by children. The final verse, a hymn of praise, was sung by everyone. Friedrich Spee (1591-1635) seems an unlikely candidate for a composer of carols. A Jesuit priest and professor, he was best known for his vigorous opposition to the use of torture in interrogation and trials, but he also published a popular collection of songs, including the *Echo Carol*, in 1625. For *Ding dong! Merrily on high*, it is the tune rather than the text which is ancient. It appeared in the 1529 *Orchésographie*, a quirky manual of dance instruction and social advice written by French abbé Jehan Tabourot under the anagrammatic pen name Thoinot Arbeau. The lyrics were lovingly crafted in an Old English style by George Ratcliffe Woodward in 1924.

What to listen for

James Laster's *Carol Fest* is a medley of six European carols representing Germany (*In dulci jubilo*; *Joseph dearest*, *Joseph mine*; *Echo Carol*), England (*O little town of Bethlehem* – the “English” version, composed by Vaughan Williams), and France (*Ding dong! Merrily on high*). Laster uses melodic similarities as connective tissue in this set. In *In dulci jubilo* and *Joseph dearest*, a swinging, lilting 6/8 rhythm and upward melodic pattern link these two adjacent pieces. Similarly, the melodic contour of *From heaven above* is nearly identical to that of *Echo Carol*. The power and brilliance of both the organ and the brass are on full display, particularly at the triumphant closing of *Ding dong! Merrily on high*.

Tell it...

There are actually two English wassailing traditions. One is the familiar version of people going door to door, calling down blessings on a household in return for a libation. The other involved people visiting apple orchards, where they would sing and dance in circles around the trees and pour libations onto the ground to ensure a bountiful harvest next season. The enterprising wassailers in the *Apple-Tree Wassail* were apparently able to combine both traditions. The last verse is often accompanied by rhythmic stamping by the singers to simulate dancing.

Robert MacGimsey (1898-1979) was a lawyer, composer, ethnomusicologist and professional whistler (he apparently could whistle three pitches at the same time.) He developed a life-long interest in spirituals and African-American folk music from the workers on his parents' plantation in Louisiana, and mastered the genre to the extent that many listeners erroneously thought he was African-American himself. His 1934 spiritual carol *Sweet Little Jesus Boy* is his most famous composition.

Philadelphia-born composer Bruce Saylor (b. 1952) is best known for his vocal music, which includes operas, songs and choral works. He has also composed music for ceremonial and celebratory occasions, including this 1990 arrangement of *Go tell it on the mountain*, one of several pieces written for the *Jessye Norman at Notre Dame: A Christmas Concert* live performance.

What to listen for

Sacred and secular music mingle in this closing set featuring music in folk styles: a jolly *Apple Tree Wassail*, arranged by prolific and playful arranger Stephen Hatfield; a highly popular *Christmas Medley* made most famous by the a cappella ensemble Straight No Chaser, by Richard Gregory; and an improvised piano solo on *Sweet Little Jesus Boy*, a piece composed in a spiritual style and made famous in performances by such African American artists as Mahalia Jackson and Take Six. Our closing *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, no doubt the most famous of Christmas spirituals, is a rhythmically driving, jazz-influenced arrangement, written for Jessye Norman and choir at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris in 1990. The choir “tells it” indeed, both “over the hills” and, cleverly, “over and over and over.” After a calm, lyrical “wise men” verse, the choir and soloist build to a rousing finish, complete with a solo vocal cadenza (a quasi-improvisation) and closing high note to anchor the chorus’s final “telling” of the great birth.

– Paul Rardin and Michael Moore

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THE TEXTS

O come, all ye faithful

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant.
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels.
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

God of God, Light of Light,
Lo, he abhors not
the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
begotten, not created.
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above:
Glory to God
In the highest:
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

A child is born in Bethlehem

A child is born in Bethlehem,
Alleluia, alleluia!
Await him all Jerusalem,
Alleluia, alleluia!
From Gabriel the word has come:
Alleluia, alleluia!

The Virgin will conceive a son,
Alleluia, alleluia!

Within a manger now he lies,
The King of Kings and Lord most high.
The shepherds hear the angels word,
This child is truly Christ our Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia!

The Magi, from the desert sun,
Alleluia, alleluia!

With incense, gold and myrrh they come,
Alleluia, alleluia!
And with their gifts they enter in,
Alleluia, alleluia!
And worship Christ the newborn King.
Alleluia, alleluia

He comes to save us from our sin.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Let joy and love and life begin!
Alleluia, alleluia!
To Father, Son and Spirit praise.
Alleluia, alleluia!
To God on high our voices raise.
Alleluia, alleluia!

Bach: Christmas Oratorio

Recitative

*Und alsobald war da bei dem Engel die
Menge der himmlischen Heerschaftern, die
lobten Gott und sprachen:*

And suddenly there was with the Angel
a multitude of the heavenly host, praising
God and saying:

Chorus

*Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe, und Frieden auf
Erden, und den Menschen ein Wohlgefallen.*

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace on
earth, and good will towards men.*

Chorale

*Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht,
und laß den Himmel tagen!*

Break forth, o beauteous Heavenly light,
and usher in the morning!

*Du Hirtenvolk, erschrecke nicht,
weil dir die Engel sagen:
daß dieses schwache Knäbelein
soll unser Trost und Freude sein,
dazu den Satan zwingen
und letztlich Freunden bringen.*

– Johann Rist

O shepherds, shrink not with affright,
but hear the angels warning.
This child, now weak in infancy,
our confidence and joy shall be,
the power of Satan breaking,
our peace eternal making.

– translation by John Troutbeck

While shepherds watched their flocks

While shepherds watched their flocks
by night,

All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around,
And glory shone around.

“Fear not!” said he; for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind,
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
To you and all mankind,
To you and all mankind.”

“To you, in David’s town, this day
Is born, of David’s line,
The Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord;

And this shall be the sign,
And this shall be the sign.”

“The heav’nly babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid,
And in a manger laid.”

“All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Good-will henceforth from heav’n to men,
Begin and never cease,
Begin and never cease!”

– Nahum Tate

Lo, how a rose e’erblooming

Lo, how a rose e’erblooming,
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming,
as men of old have sung.

It came a floweret bright,
amid the cold of winter
when half-spent was the night.

– translation by Theodore Baker

Silent night

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav’nly hosts sing Alleluia:

Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love’s pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

– Translation by John Freeman Young

Mi zeh hidlik

*Mi zeh hidlik neirot dakim
kakochavim barom?
Yodim gam tinokot rabim
ki Chanukah hayom.*

Who will light the narrow candles
Like stars in the heavens?
Even the many little children know
That today is Chanukah.

Harambee

*Harambee, Harambee, Harambee, Harambee,
Harambee, Harambee, Harambee.
Seven times I call you to unity.*

*I call for my mother, I call for my father
I call for my sisters, I call for my
brothers,
I call for grandfathers, I call for
grandmothers
I call for my fam'ly, come to unity.*

*Harambee, Harambee, Harambee, Harambee,
Harambee, Harambee, Harambee.
Seven times I call you to unity.*

*I call for Umoja, I call for Kujichagulia.
I call for Ujima, I call for Ujamaa,
I call for Nia, I call for Kuuumba,
I call for Imani, come to unity.*

*Harambee, Harambee, Harambee, Harambee,
Harambee, Harambee, Harambee.
Seven times I call you to unity.*

– Dorothy Winbush Riley

We three kings

*We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.*

Chorus:

*O Star of wonder, Star of night,
Star with royal beauty beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to the perfect light.*

*Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign.*

Chorus

*Frankincense to offer have I,
Incense owns a Deity nigh.*

*Pray'r and praising all men raising
Worship Him, God most high.*

Chorus

*Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes a lift of gathering gloom;
Sorr'wing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.*

Chorus

*Glorious now, behold Him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice,
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Earth to the heav'ns replies.*

Chorus

– John Henry Hopkins, Jr.

Carol Fest

In dulci jubilo

*Let us our homage show;
Our heart's joy reclineth*

In præsipio;

Like a bright star shineth

Matris in gremio

Alpha es et O.

*"Joseph dearest, Joseph mine,
Help me cradle the child divine;
God reward thee and all that's thine
In paradise," so prays the mother Mary.*

*He came upon us at Christmastide,
At Christmastide in Bethlehem:
Men shall bring him from far and wide
love's diadem:
Jesus, Jesus,
Lo he comes, and love, and saves, and
frees us!*

*"Gladly, dear one, lady mine,
Help I cradle this child of thine;
God's own light on us both shall shine,
In paradise, as prays the mother Mary."*

*He came upon us at Christmastide,
At Christmastide in Bethlehem:
Men shall bring him from far and wide
love's diadem:*

*Jesus, Jesus,
Lo he comes, and love, and saves, and
frees us!*

*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;*

The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born is us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

From heav'n above to earth I come
Glad tidings of great joy I bring to all the
world,
and gladly sing.

While by my sheep I watched at night,
Glad tidings brought and angel bright.
How great my joy! Joy, joy, joy!
Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high.

This gift of God we'll cherish well,
That ever joy our hearts shall fill.
How great my joy! Joy, joy, joy!
Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high.

Ding dong! merrily on high
in heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
is riv'n with angels singing.
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis.

E'en so here below, below,
let steeple bells be swungen.
And io, io, io
by priest and people sungen.
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis.

Pray you, dutifully prime
your matin chime, ye ringers:
May you beautifully rime
your evetime song, ye singers:
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis.

Hark! The herald angels sing

Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the
newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and
sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the tri-
umph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim, Christ is
born in Bethlehem.
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the
newborn King.

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with
healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man
no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to
give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the
newborn King.

— Charles Wesley
as edited by George Whitfield

Apple-Tree Wassail

Oh lily, white lily, oh lily white pin
Please to come down an' let us come in.
Oh lily, white lily, oh lily white smock,
Please to come down an' turn back the
lock.
Our wassail, jolly wassail,
Joy come to our jolly wassail.
How well it may bloom, how well it may
bear,
So that we may have apples and cider
all year.
Oh, master and mistress, how are you
within?
Please to come down an' pull back the
pin.

Good health to yer house, may riches
come soon.
So bring us some cider, we'll drink down
the moon.
There was an old farmer an' he had an
old cow.
Went out to milk 'er, he didn't know
how.
He put his old cow down in his old barn,
An' a little more cider won't do us no
harm.
Ah, me boys, ah!
A little more cider won't do us no harm.

Go tell it on the mountain

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the fields and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

When I was a seeker,
I sought both night and day.
I asked the Lord to help me,
And He showed me the way.
Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the fields and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

The Lord made me a watchman,
Upon the city wall,
And if I am a Christian,
I am the least of all.

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the fields and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

Wise men and shepherds
All hailed the Savior's birth.
He came to spread the message
Of peace to all the earth.
Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the fields and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

Oh hear the angels singing,
Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the fields and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

The first Nowell

The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields
where they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their
sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so
deep:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star,
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of
naught,
And with his blood mankind hath
bought:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

Mendelssohn Club makes its concert programs available in Braille for audience members who are visually impaired. Requests must be made at least one week in advance by calling Mendelssohn Club at 215.735.9922 or visiting our website at www.mcchorus.org.

THE PERFORMERS

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, one of America's longest-standing musical ensembles, is performing its 143rd season, and its second season with its 13th Artistic Director, Dr. Paul Rardin. Since its founding in 1874, the chorus has carried on a rich tradition of performing the great works of the choral canon while also premiering, performing, and commissioning new choral works at the highest artistic level. The chorus has performed under the batons of world famous conductors such as Sergei Rachmaninoff, Eugene Ormandy, Claudio Abbado, Zubin Mehta, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Riccardo Muti, and has maintained a performing relationship with the Philadelphia Orchestra since its inception.

In its early history, Mendelssohn Club gave the Philadelphia premiere of Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, American premieres of Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, and the first performance outside of the USSR of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 13*. These works, many of which are now considered some of the greatest choral works ever written, were new and sometimes experimental at the time of their premieres. Mendelssohn Club continues this tradition today through commissions from luminaries such as Alberto Ginastera, Alice Parker, and Jennifer Higdon.

Mendelssohn Club has commissioned 58 works since 1990 under Artistic Director Alan Harler, and Maestro Rardin has commissioned five more for this season. Mendelssohn Club is known throughout the nation as a leader in advancing the field of choral music. Recognition for this dedication, as well as our commitment to artistic excellence, is seen through a Grammy nomination for the 1985 recording of Vincent Persichetti's *Winter Cantata*, Mendelssohn Club receiving the 1992 and 2013 ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming, and our 2014 commission, Julia Wolfe's *Anthracite Fields*, receiving the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music.



Sharon Torelli

Maestro Paul Rardin leads Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia and Symphony in C in his inaugural concert as Mendelssohn Club Artistic Director, "Beginnings..." at the Church of the Holy Trinity in October 2015.

In its more recent history, Mendelssohn Club has deepened its mission to take artistic risks that challenge both singers and audiences through commissioning new works that include cross-genre performance. Recent commissions such as David Lang's *battle hymns*, Julia Wolfe's *Anthrax Fields*, and Byron Au Yong's *TURBINE* integrate artistic elements such as dance, ensemble choreography, projections, and even audience movement into our performances to create a fully immersive experience for our audience members.

Paul Rardin, Artistic Director

Paul Rardin is the thirteenth Artistic Director of Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia. He is also Elaine Brown Chair of Choral Music at Temple University, where he conducts the Concert Choir, teaches graduate conducting, and oversees the seven-choir program at Temple's Boyer College of Music and Dance. Rardin previously taught at the University of Michigan and Towson University, where his choirs appeared with the Kirov Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Baltimore Choral Arts Society. Under his direction the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club performed at the 2010 American Choral Directors Central Division Convention. In 2015 the Temple University Concert Choir performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Bernstein's *MASS* under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin.



Nick Kelsch

Rardin has served as a guest conductor for all-state choirs in fifteen states, for divisional honor choirs for the ACDA and Music Educators National Conference, and for Manhattan Concert Productions at Lincoln Center. He has presented clinics for state, regional, and national conferences of the American Choral Directors Association. His engagements for 2015-2016 include conducting the Temple University Concert Choir in conference presentations for the National Collegiate Choral Organization and ACDA Eastern Division; guest conducting the Ohio All-State chorus and PMEA District 12 chorus; and guest conducting at Carnegie Hall with Manhattan Concert Productions.

Rardin is a graduate of Williams College and the University of Michigan, where he received the M.M. in composition and the D.M.A. in conducting. He has studied conducting with Theodore Morrison, Jerry Blackstone, and Gustav Meier, and composition with Leslie Bassett, George Wilson, and Robert Suderburg. He has also participated in conducting master classes with Helmuth Rilling, Charles Bruffy, and Dale Warland. His arrangements of spirituals and folk songs are published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing, and his articles, many on the topic of contemporary music, have appeared in the ACDA publications *Choral Journal*, *Troubadour*, *Resound*, and *Bel Canto*.

Rardin lives in suburban Philadelphia with his wife, Sandy.

Michael Stairs, organ

Michael Stairs was born in Milo, Maine and vividly remembers loving the sound of a pipe organ at the two services per Sunday at his father's church in Gardiner. Against his father's wishes, he began studying piano in Presque Isle at age ten but paid for the first year of lessons by picking potatoes vigorously. After high school in Erie, PA, he went on to Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. There he accompanied the 300-voice Symphonic Choir under the batons of great conductors such as Leopold Stokowski and Leonard Bernstein. He studied organ with George Markey and Alexander McCurdy and improvisation with Alec Wyton. He then went on to earn the coveted Artist's Diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music, studying organ with Alexander McCurdy and piano with Vladimir Sokoloff.



Michael retired in June 2012 from twenty-five years of teaching Upper School Music at The Haverford School, where he was awarded the first Grace and Mahlon Buck Chair in the Performing Arts. Under his direction, The Glee Club and small vocal ensemble, The Notables, have toured twelve overseas countries. Stairs retired in January of 2008 as organist/choirmaster at Bryn Mawr's Church of the Redeemer after serving twenty-five years in that post. He has now returned as Organist Emeritus under the leadership of Dr. Michael Diorio. Michael serves on the boards of the Friends of the Wanamaker Organ, The Garrigues Foundation and The Presser Foundation where he chairs the Advancement Committee.

Riccardo Muti appointed Stairs as organist for the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1985. He has since been a featured soloist with this ensemble in various locations ranging from New York's Carnegie Hall to Tokyo's Suntory Hall. Maestros Christoph Eschenbach and Charles Dutoit featured Michael in several concerts on Verizon Hall's Dobson organ, the largest mechanical-action concert hall pipe organ in North America. He has been a member of the Allen Artists program for several years.

His most recent album from Girard College's magnificent Æolian organ is titled *Sacred and Profane*. It is a double CD produced through his new company with partners Rudy Lucente and Douglas Backman: Stentor Music Services.

Matthew Brower, piano

Matthew Brower is a pianist, coach, and educator who brings vision and sensitivity to a variety of genres, from classical piano, chamber music, opera and art song to musical theatre and jazz. At age 11 he made his New York City debut, performing an original composition at Weill Recital Hall (Carnegie Hall). He has since performed in such prestigious venues as Alice Tully Hall (Lincoln Center), Merkin Hall, and Steinway Hall.

Alongside violinist Xiang Gao (Professor of Violin at the University of Delaware) and erhuist Cathy Yang, Dr. Brower is a member of the 6ixwire Project, acclaimed for its synthesis of traditional and contemporary Eastern and Western musical styles. He recently completed an outreach tour with Gao in Beijing, China, and also performed with members of top tier orchestras and conservatories as the faculty accompanist of the University of Delaware's Master Players Festival.



Dr. Brower's operatic experience includes two seasons as the chorus pianist and musical assistant at Opera Philadelphia as well as productions with Toledo Opera, Opera in the Ozarks, and the Centre for Opera Studies in Italy. He has worked as an accompanist and vocal coach at Westminster Choir College, the University of Michigan, the College of New Jersey, and the Curtis Institute's Summerfest Young Artist Voice program.

He received his bachelor's degree in Piano Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and his master's and doctorate degrees in Collaborative Piano from the University of Michigan. In 2015, Dr. Brower was appointed Lecturer of Piano at Washington College in Chestertown, MD.

The Mendelssohn Brass

The Mendelssohn Brass are excited to join Paul Rardin and the Mendelssohn Club Chorus for this year's *Feast of Carols*, a highlight of the quintet's performance calendar. Members of the ensemble are among the East Coast's most sought after brass musicians, having performed with such ensembles as The Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Delaware Symphony, Opera Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Ballet, Iris Orchestra, and Charleston Symphony, among others. The ensemble includes Eric Schweingruber and Darin Kelly, trumpets; Karen Schubert, French horn; Jason Stein, trombone; and Paul Erion, tuba.

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 Lauren Eliza Darkes
 Jean Dowdall
 Roberta Fischer
 Teri Gemberling-Johnson
 Kelsey Hendler
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 Thornburgh
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ALAN HARLER NEW VENTURES FUND

The Alan Harler New Ventures Fund was established in 2007 to assure the continuation of his landmark initiatives and adventurous programming. It has supported the commissioning of Jennifer Higdon's *On the Death of the Righteous*, David Lang's *battle hymns*, and Rollo Dillworth's *Rain Sequence*, as well as the commercial recording *Metamorphosis*, featuring *On the Death of the Righteous*, Andrea Clearfield's *The Golem Psalms*, and James Primosch's *Fire-Memory/River-Memory*. (Gifts received between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016).

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